CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

State Water Resources Control Board

California Water News

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 8, 2003
SWRCB 03-007

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STATE WATER BOARD APPROVES $500,000 GRANT FOR IMPERIAL BEACH PROJECT

Sacramento – The State Water Resources Control Board today approved a $500,000 grant for the final phase of a project that will help keep urban runoff from polluting the ocean along Imperial Beach in southern San Diego County during dry-weather months.

Funding for the project comes from the Clean Beaches Initiative, part of Proposition 13, the Safe Drinking Water, Clean Water, Watershed Protection and Flood Protection Act of 2000. Passed by voters, the $1.97 billion bond program funds projects that protect the State's waterways, beaches, and drinking water. (Proposition funds are not part of the State's General Fund.)

The grant is part of a $1.5 million appropriation to the City for diversion and monitoring projects that will reduce and eventually eliminate beach closings and postings due to bacteria contamination. This grant is the third phase of projects, which have included three projects that address eliminating sources of bacterial contamination and reducing onshore bacteria counts. To date, the SWRCB has provided $750,000 for the Ocean Observing System for fecal bacteria source abatement, $250,000 for the Date Avenue dry weather diversion, and the new grant of $500,000 for the Palm Ave dry weather diversion. The two diversion projects will reroute dry weather urban runoff to the sanitary sewer system.

"The public health and economic threat to our beaches posed by polluted runoff is real," said State Water Resources Control Board Chair Art Baggett. "These grants help state and local agencies address contamination, making our beaches safer, and ensuring the economic vitality of coastal communities."

"The bacterial contamination of Imperial Beach has been a problem in the area for quite some time," said Senator Denise Moreno Ducheny. "The funding for the final phase of the project to end contaminated urban runoff is crucial to the economic and environmental sustainability of Imperial Beach."

"I am pleased that my district will be able to benefit from funding that will improve the environmental surroundings and ensure a clean and healthy beach for all," said Assemblymember Juan Vargas, whose district includes Imperial Beach.

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"The City of Imperial Beach has been in the forefront of efforts by California's coastal communities to protect their beaches against bacterial contamination from all sources," said San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board Executive Officer John Robertus. "We are happy to have a role in providing funding that will assist in these efforts."

The Clean Beaches Initiative provides $35 million for coastal cleanup projects throughout the state, to alleviate the health hazards and beach postings and closures caused by non-point source pollution. Non-point source pollution is urban runoff contaminated by pesticides, fertilizers, human and animal wastes, oil, grease, sediments, and other toxics used in our everyday lives.

Here are a few additional facts:

- The City of Imperial Beach, located in southern San Diego County, is a popular beach destination with an average of 2 million visitors per year.

- The City experiences a significant number of beach closures due to high concentrations of indicator bacteria. Based on San Diego County data, the beaches in the City were posted or closed 34.5 Beach Mile Days (BMD's) in 2000, 74.6 BMD's in 2001, and 22.1 BMD's in 2002.

- Urban runoff contains bacteria-laden animal waste, lawn & garden fertilizers, gas & oil from cars, and plastic trash.
- Health hazards from bacteria contamination can affect swimmers, surfers, and beach goers.
- When a beach is closed due to contamination, the economic effect can be devastating to local business owners.
- Diverting urban runoff to a waste water treatment plant will help prevent this contamination from occurring.

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- A Dry Weather Diverter will be placed in the new Palm Avenue storm water discharge pump station. The pump station services a drainage area of approximately 83.2 acres of a mostly residential area and discharges storm water into the ocean. The pump station project will consist of a submersible pump in a wet well, 2 centrifugal storm water pumps, and the relocation of 30-inch piping for the storm drain conveyance system.

- The submersible pump will be used to pump non-storm water and the first flush of contaminated storm water from the wet well to the sanitary sewer. This pump will have a capacity of 250 gallons-per-minute (gpm) and be designed to start before the storm water pumps.

- The 15-foot deep wet well and 30-inch piping will have the capability to store up to 3,260 cubic feet of storm water before the storm water pumps turn on. This exceeds the capacity necessary to store storm water from a 10-year storm. The two storm water pumps will have a minimum total capacity of 13,000 gpm and be used to pump storm water to the ocean. The storm water pumps will be designed to turn on when a certain level is reached in the wet well.

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